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BUSH ECHOES

W. A. HORN

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"I think that your Australian verses are the real thing, two or three of them are as good as the best of Adam Lindsay Gordon. They are the real life and I am most grateful for the little book."—Sir Gilbert Parker.

"I have read and re-read your verses until the lines are ringing in my head and stirring up old memories. The words and rhythm must appeal to every man who knows the charm of the 'Back of Beyond.'"—Wm. Gilbert.

"Your charming poem 'The Call of the Bush' gives a beautiful picture of fine wild country. I particularly like your description of Kosciusko where I spent many happy days."—Lord Denman.

"Your verses have the true poetic ring and the Bush ring also. Reading them has carried me back through many a wild ride and stirring scene in the Australian Bush."—

Simpson Newland.

"I am greatly indebted to you for sending me a copy of your charming verses, instinct with the spirit of the Australian Bush. They have the swing and rhythm of Lindsay Gordon, and should find a place in any anthology of Australian verse."—Lord Jersey *(the late).*

"Your 'Call of the Bush' is glorious, I am sincerely glad to have it."—O. H. I. Richsbieth, *Rhodes Scholar.*

"It will give great pleasure to many Australians at Oxford if you will allow your 'Call of the Bush' to appear in the 'Varsity.'"—C. B. Gull, *Editor of "Varsity."*

"Your 'Call of the Bush' is charming, I am delighted with it."—Chief Justice Way, *of S. Australia.*

"My wife and I have read and re-read the 'Call of the Bush' with real enjoyment. It is delightful.' —

Admiral Mann.

Adam Lindsay Gordon

In Adam Lindsay Gordons verse
The flowing Couplets gleam
Yet in their theme an undersong
Of Sadness in his theme

Sweet singer of a by gone day
He did not sing in vain
His verse has gladden'd many a home
On Austral hill and plain

Bronzed Bushmen quote him in their Camps
Among the far blue hills
In homesteads, Woolsheds, or the huts
His ring and rhythm thrills

Yon churchyard holds the mortal shell
That once Confined his soul
His shining Spirit passed ere he
had Reached Ambitions Goal

Affection decks the poets Grave
And Memory sheds a tear
For him who was of Australs verse
The Gifted Pioneer

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BUSH ECHOES

BY

W. A. HORN

PROCEEDS FOR BENEFIT OF WOUNDED AUSTRALIANS

LONDON:
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Introduction

"There are rhymes rudely strung with intent less of sound than of words,
In a land where bright blossoms are scentless and songless bright birds."

THESE lines were written by my old friend Adam Lindsay Gordon, and it has always been a mystery to me why he and also Marcus Clarke, both of whom were keen lovers of Nature, should have described our flowers as scentless and our birds as songless.

The Shrike of Central Australia, known locally as the "Butcher bird," with his joyous flute-like notes, is unrivalled as a songster, while the Australian Magpie is little, if anything, inferior to him.

Among the flowering shrubs, the Golden Wattle, the Boronia Megastigma and the Eucalyptus Citriodora cannot be truly described as scentless. Their delicious perfume, with the early morning dew upon them, is all pervading, yet subtly sweet, without being oppressive.

Australia is certainly a land of strange contradictions.

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A curious medley of the grotesque and the beautiful.

Central Australia, during periods of drought, is a barren desert, but in good seasons is a land of gay flowers and luscious pastures. The changes are almost kaleidoscopic. I have crossed these vast silent plains during periods of drought when there has not been a sign of annual vegetation. The whole country being a scene of solitude and desolation which beggars description ; its moods seem as eccentric as the flight of the black fellow's boomerang. For, on returning within a month after rain, I have found it resembling a garden of Eden, gay with wild flowers and luxuriant herbage. A land "made green with the running of rivers and gracious with temperate airs."

In the portions of Australia adjoining the fringe of the coast line, where the rainfall is most evenly distributed, the country is exceedingly fertile, the climate salubrious, and the bush life most enjoyable. As Marcus Clarke says:—

"Australia has rightly been named the Land of the

"Dawning. Wrapped in the mists of early morning, her history looms vague and gigantic. The lonely horseman riding between the moonlight and the day sees vast shadows creeping across the shelterless and silent plains, hears strange noises in the primeval forest, where flourishes a vegetation long dead in other lands, and feels, despite his fortune, that the trim utilitarian civilisation which bred him shrinks into insignificance beside the contemptuous grandeur of forest and ranges coeval with an age in which European scientists have cradled his own race.

There is a poem in every form of tree or flower, but the poetry which lives in the trees and flowers of Australia differs from those of other countries. Europe is the home of knightly song, of bright deeds and clear morning thought. Asia sinks beneath the weighty recollections of her past magnificence. America swiftly hurries on her way, rapid, glittering, insatiable even as one of her own giant waterfalls. From the jungles of Africa, and the creeper-tangled groves of the islands of the South, arise, from the glowing hearts of a thousand flowers, heavy and intoxicating odours—the Upas-poison which dwells in barbaric sensuality. In Australia alone is to be found the Grotesque, the Weird, the strange scribblings of nature learning how to write. Some see no beauty in our trees without shade, our"

"*flowers without perfume*, our birds who cannot fly, and our beasts who have not yet learned to walk on all fours. But the dweller in the wilderness acknowledges the subtle charm of this fantastic land of monstrosities. He becomes familar with the beauty of loneliness. Whispered to by the myraid tongues of the wilderness, he learns the language of the barren and the uncouth, and can read the hieroglyphs of haggard gum trees, blown into odd shapes, distorted with fierce hot winds, or cramped with cold nights, when the Southern Cross freezes in a cloudless sky of icy blue. The phantasmagoria of that wild dreamland termed the Bush interprets itself, and the Poet of our desolation begins to comprehend why free Esau loved his heritage of desert sand better than all the bountiful richness of Egypt."

The few verses appended hereto relate mostly to things Australian and are published at the request of my Australian friends, and in the hope that they may serve to remind our fellow countrymen of their distant homes, and possibly lighten a weary moment or two in the trenches.

W. A. Horn,

Wimbledon, 1915.

(*Wood Carving.*—W. A. H.)

LISTENING.

THE CALL OF EMPIRE.

HARK the Empire's call resounding
O'er ten thousand leagues of sea.
Shall Great Britain's Greater Britain
Help to keep the Empire free?

Yes! the crimson flame of kinship
Welds the links that bind us fast;
May they hold us through the ages
As they held us in the past.

We will send our proud battalions,
Rallying to the Empire's call,
Loyal sons of loyal fathers,
Stalwart soldiers, one and all.

Men from heights of Tongariro,
Men from Austral's boundless plains,
They would rather death for Britain
Than a life in Teuton chains.

Dwellers in vast silent spaces
Live with Nature face to face,
And combine, with self-reliance,
All the courage of their race.

Haste! Unfurl the Royal Standard,
Let the Empire's foemen see
Australasia's sons and Britons
Gripping hands across the sea.

Loud the battle cry of Freedom
Echo's o'er each stormy wave.
They will fight with courage leading
On to Victory or the grave.

Midst the roar and crash of battle,
Lord of Hosts we ask of Thee,
Give them strength to fight and conquer,
That our children may be free.

. . . . .

On the blood-soaked Turkish beaches
Austral's sons have bled and died,
And while dying, still saluting
Britain's flag with loyal pride.

While a rubric page in history
Tells of those who nobly led,
We may hold in proud remembrance
All the still more noble dead.

Shatter'd by the Turkish shrapnel,
They had scorned to cry Retreat,
Never having known surrender,
They refused to know defeat.

Fighting for the Empire's freedom,
They had fought to do or die,
And full many an empty saddle
Speaks to many a tearful eye.

They had feared no death when Honour
Summoned them to Britain's aid,
Now they rest in shrouds of glory,
Every debt of Honour paid.

O'er their graves no pealing anthem,
Just the night-wind murmuring low;
May we hear their Cooe's echo
When the western breezes blow.

Then the *She-Oak's ceaseless wailing
Thro' the air may softly float,
Mingling with a wail of sorrow,
From some anguished mother's throat.

Stand ye fast! my gallant kinsmen,
Hold the ground so bravely won;
In your blood the tale is written
Of a soldier's duty done.

Ye who left your peaceful homesteads,
Rallying to the bugle's call,
Fight to win or die while fighting,
With your backs against the wall.

Fame's fair scroll will tell the story,
Bards as yet unborn shall sing,
How you won undying glory,
Steadfast soldiers of your King.

*"She-Oak." The *casuarina quadrivalvis*, having a hair like foliage through which the passing wind produces a low plaintive wail.

FALCON.

THE CALL OF THE "BUSH."

FROM vast Australia's varied "Bush," a
myriad voices call,
And though they may be mute to some, I seem
to hear them all.
From white and spectral gum trees, hang long
strips of rustling bark,
Which, trembling in the night-wind, seem like
voices in the dark.
The sighing she-oaks sang to me, in camping
days of old ;
A sweetness—if a sadness—in the stories that
they told.
I still recall those fire-lit camps, among the
flocks and herds,
Awaking at the dawning to the chorus of the
birds.
In stillness of a star-lit night, the mournful
Curlew's call,

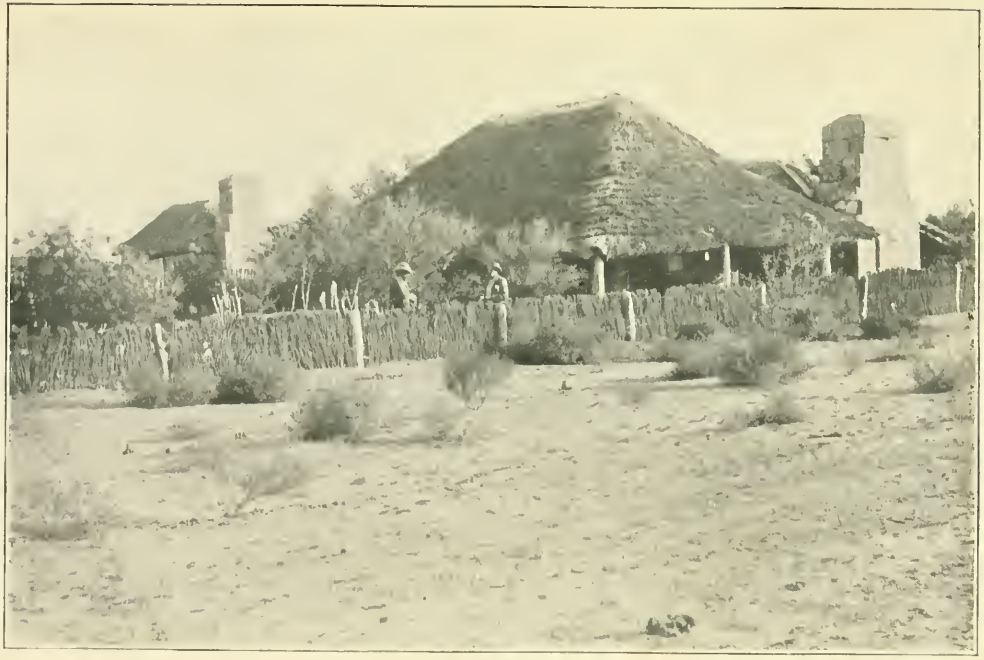
The wailing of the dingo rising plaintive over all.
The fragrant breath of morning sweeps, dew-laden, through the trees,
While feathered songsters' madrigals come floating on the breeze.
These warblers of the wilderness acclaim the new-born day,
The air is vibrant with their song that echoes far away.
The Bell-bird softly counterfeits in some secluded dell
That seems so near, yet is so far, a hobbled horse's bell,
This silver-tongued ventriloquist with tinkling note beguiles
The lonely horseman from his camp, by rhythm in his wiles.
The glorious song of Butcher-bird, melodious in the morn,
Sweet minstrel of departing day, bright herald of the Dawn ;
His clarion notes so clear and true, float on from hill to hill,

'Tis years since last I heard them, but I listen
for them still.
The Bronzewing from the water like a meteor
flashes by,
The Eagle grandly soaring in a blue and cloud-
less sky.
The silver-fluted Magpie from a full harmonious
throat
Pours out a flood of melody in every liquid
note.
The memory of its cadence on a distant bygone
day
Recalls those boundless salt-bush plains, and
blue hills far away—
Recalls the shimmering noonday heat when
mirage lakes appear
And phantom trees fringe phantom isles that
stud each phantom mere.
Recalls old comrades of the Bush, and camp-
fire stories told
Where golden wattles shed their bloom in
showers of powdered gold.
The fragrant golden blossom, lightly wafted by
the breeze,

Falls like a perfumed aureole around the glist'ning trees.
The subtle scent that lingers when the blooms have ceased to fall,
Tho' fainter than the first perfume, is sweeter than them all.
Across the Snowy river, on towards the "Great Divide,"
Where glist'ning snows are gleaming white on Kosciusko's side
That perfumed wattle calls to me from every gilded hill,
I've longed for all its fragrance and I'm longing for it still.
I seem to see that Mount again, in garb of driven snow,
The vaulted blue above it, and the sun-lit slopes below.
While down each wooded mountain glen, where rocks on rocks are piled,
A sweet melodious chorus floats from warblers of the Wild.
The white walls of my old Bush home again I seem to see,

'Twas roughly slabbed and rudely thatched—
yet " Home, Sweet Home " to me.
I see the blue smoke's misty wreath above the
Homestead roofs,
I hear the bellowing of the herd—the thunder
of their hoofs.
I hear the whistling stockwhips, and the crash
of breaking rails,
And see those splendid horsemen ride with
nerve that never fails.
See distant hills in silhouette against the
evening glow,
Each purple peak reflected in the mirrored
pool below.
And now the night seems closing in, the
evening shadows fall,
The glorious lights of afterglow more beautiful
than all.
The Western skies seem all ablaze with lights
of varied hue,
The dying sun, in burnished gold, in dome of
Heavenly blue.
Its blood-shot disc illumined by the last expiring
ray,

Enveloped in a crimson pall sinks silently
away.
Intense the hushes of the Night, their very
silence heard,
A voiceless murmur of the Bush tho' not a leaf
is stirred.
A solemn stillness reigns around, slow pales
the glowing West,
Beneath the glitt'ring Southern Cross all
Nature seems at rest.
No mortal's brush could reproduce a picture so
Divine,
The memory of it oft recalls the days of Auld
lang Syne.
In wild exploring days of old the world seemed
wide and free,
When not a track existed from the salt-bush
to the sea.
And could my life-stream only flow, as in the
days of yore,
The secrets of the trackless Bush I might again
explore!
The mystic charm of untrod lands appealing
still to me,



BUSH HOME.

From trammels of an urban life I'm longing to be free.
I'm weary of a city's crowd, its hustle, noise and push;
And long to hear that old refrain—a "cooe'e" from the Bush!
I long for one more peaceful camp, wherein no sound is heard,
Save murm'ring of the night wind, or the ruffling of a bird.
Oh! give me back the Bushman's life, its freedom and its mirth,
Where man is valued for himself, and not the gold he's worth!
Yes; give me back that glorious life if only for a day—
Once more to wield the stockwhip, as the stragglers break away;
To race them over hill and plain—loose rein and tightened girth,
My lungs expanding with a draught of purest air on earth.
Fair land of flowers, of clustering fruits and skies of matchless hue,

Although vast oceans part us now fond
memories cling to you.
Your myriad voices call me, but Alas ! I cannot
go ;
Time's swift unerring glass is turned, the
sands are running low.
To London from your sun-land is a far-off,
distant cry
That I can only answer with a long—a last—
good-bye ;
Good-bye, old comrades of the Bush, we've
ridden far and wide ;
How few remain ! how many passed ! beyond
the last " Divide."
I seem to see bronzed faces that long years
ago I knew,
Old comrades of exploring days seem passing
in review.
A tremor lurking on my lip, a tear may dim
my eye,
In memory of some vanished hand, warm
clasped in days gone by.
What loyal pals they always were those
Pioneers of old,

Straight men who fought life's battle on the wild and distant wold.
Poor Lindsay Gordon, comrade true, rode always in the van,
Tall, lithe and spare, and "Devil-may-care," but every inch a man,
Sweet singer of a bygone day, his song is echoing still,
Where'er the Anglo-Saxons dwell his ringing accents thrill.
Farewell, sweet land of sun-lit plains and stars that brightly gleam,
Life's crimson tide is ebbing and I'm drifting down its stream.
Life's journey nearly ended and the lights are growing grey,
No halting place awaits me ere the closing of the day.
Yet should perchance my Spirit hear the echo of your call,
'Twill bid an Angel whisper back, How much I loved it all.

W. A. Horn.

"The Ghost of the teamster known as 'Gentleman George' is reported to have been seen again on the Yanko Plain. This teamster was killed by falling beneath the wheel of his dray. He was formerly in the Eighth Hussars and took part in the charge of the Light Brigade. He is said to have left England on account of domestic troubles."—*Riverina Paper.*

GENTLEMAN GEORGE.

GENTLEMAN George in his youthful days
was the pride of the Eighth Hussars,
He's only a bronzed old teamster now in the
land of the *Red "Galah's";
He sits on his dray, a pipe in his mouth, in
reverie, dust and smoke,
†Yet keeping an eye on that blue-roan steer
who struggles to turn the yoke.

* Galah—the red parrot of New South Wales.

†It may seem an impossible feat, but bullocks, when disinclined to work, often succeed in turning the yoke upside down.

(*Wood Carving.*—W. A. H.)

ONCE MORE TO WIELD THE STOCKWHIP.

His lips at times grow stern and set when he thinks of a traitorous wife,
And his blood grows hot with a withering scorn for the woman who ruined his life.
For the smouldering scandal had burned and blazed and sullied his spotless name,
'Twas rough on a man whose life was straight and who always had played the game,
And the scar on his cheek from a Muscovite blade, in that chivalrous charge of the Light Brigade,
Glowed scarlet at thoughts of the heartless jade who ruined his life in a day.
Creak, creak, creak, go the wheels of his rickety dray,
And he plys his whip on the blue-roan's hip.
"Woay! Bawley, come hither, woay!"

He recalls the runs with the "Hursley" pack; those glorious days with "The Vine,"
Ere the shadows of age commenced to dim the shimmer of youthful shine:
Recalls the race from point to point, on the back of the "Ascot Clown";

And the ringing cheers that rang in his ears as
he won by a length, hands down,
Recalls a scene that pleases and thrills—the
home of his youth in the Hampshire hills;
Where the Avon comes down in a thousand
rills, to the fields where he used to play.
Creak, creak, creak, go the wheels of his rickety
dray, and he thinks of the life he was
leading then
And the life he is leading to-day.
These thoughts of the grace of days long dead
rouse a bitter feeling of pain:
Ah! what would he give for a headlong charge
with the Light Brigade again;
And what of the comrades of those days; do
they still give a thought to him?
For the world too soon forgets a man when
once he is out of the swim.
In vivid dreams, when camped at night,
beneath his rickety dray,
He sees the squadrons galloping past, as their
hoof-strokes thunder away:
Sees gleaming sword blades parry and thrust,
and the dauntless valour displayed

AYERS ROCK (Monolith), Central Australia.

Five miles in circumference. 1,200 feet in height.

By his troopers who rode to certain death, in the van of the Light Brigade.
Ah! what did their country do for them—the bravest where all were brave?
It sung their deeds in a Laureate's song, but left them a pauper's grave.
Creak, creak, creak, go the wheels of the rickety dray,
As he flays a strip from the blue-roan's hip.
"Woay! Bawley, come hither, woay!"

This bearded Bushman carries himself with an easy careless grace,
And honesty written in every line of his manly, careworn face.
Tho' his mind is filled with vain regrets, it is useless now to repine,
Yet it shortens a weary mile at times, to think of the "Auld lang syne."
But the rough bush life has left its stamp on his face and his mind as well,
For in drink he strives to drown the thoughts that make his life such a hell.

His epithets savour of realms below, when the
blue-roan turns the yoke ;
A blue flame seems around his head, and an
odour of sulphurous smoke.
He's a rare good hand with a sulky steer, he
shows no mercy and knows no fear:
And the lash of his whip will scald and sear the
bullock that goes astray.
Creak, creak, creak, go the wheels of his
rickety dray,
And his whip is plied on the blue-roan's hide.
"Woay! Bawley, come hither, woay!"

He rashly stands on the pole to reach that
obstinate blue-roan steer,
When the wheel goes into a fathomless rut, and
the teamster's end is near.
He loses his balance and seems to reel as he
falls behind the blue-roan's heel,
And is crushed by that ponderous creaking
wheel in a Juggernaut kind of way.
Creak, creak, creak, go the wheels of the
rickety dray,

And the lamp of his life goes flickering out at the close of that fateful day.

. . . . . .

Thus ended the life of a man who rode in the van of the Light Brigade.
They buried him out on the Yanko Plain, where there isn't a shadow of shade:
No comrade to close his bloodshot eyes or to drop a regretful tear,
And little to mark his lonely grave on that shadeless plain so drear.
A rough hewn cross by a Bushman placed at the head of a mound of loam ;
His name unknown to his pals abroad, forgotten by all at home.
No funeral anthem's notes are heard o'er the grave of that dead Hussar ;
Instead of the kettledrum's roll they hear the screech of the Red Galah.
A G interlaced with G on the cross, and a short bush prayer was said,
While a curlew's plaintive wailing note seemed a requiem over the dead.

'Tis the old, old tale of a ruined "Swell," who
goes to the Bush and perhaps to —— well
We'll hope for the best you never can tell, there
may be a rut on the way.
His spirit now roams those dreary plains in the
land of the Red Galah ;

'Tis the soul of a teamster that haunts the spot,
not that of an Eighth Hussar.
If you cross those plains in the dead of night,
you'll hear that team in a headlong flight,
And the shout of the driver in ghostly white :
"Woay ! Bawley, come hither, woay ! "

Creak, creak, creak, go the wheels of the
vanishing dray,
The slash of a whip on a skeleton hip, as the
hoof-strokes echo away.

(*Photo in Australia.*)

THUNDERSTORM.

"FALCON," THE PRIDE OF THE RUN.

A BRIGHT satin bay, that seemed blended
With sheen of red gold in the sun,
With a head that was "bloodlike and splendid"
Was "Falcon," the Pride of the Run.

He was ribbed to the hips like a Centaur,
Deep-chested and lengthy of rein,
And the blood of the stallions of Egypt
Coursed hot through each prominent vein.

His dam was a thoroughbred Arab,
His sire was by "Talk of the Hill,"
And though he's been dead for a decade,
He lives in our memories still.

A typical son of "Zuleika,"
Improving in shape with his years,
All his equine emotions expressed
By the play of his beautiful ears.

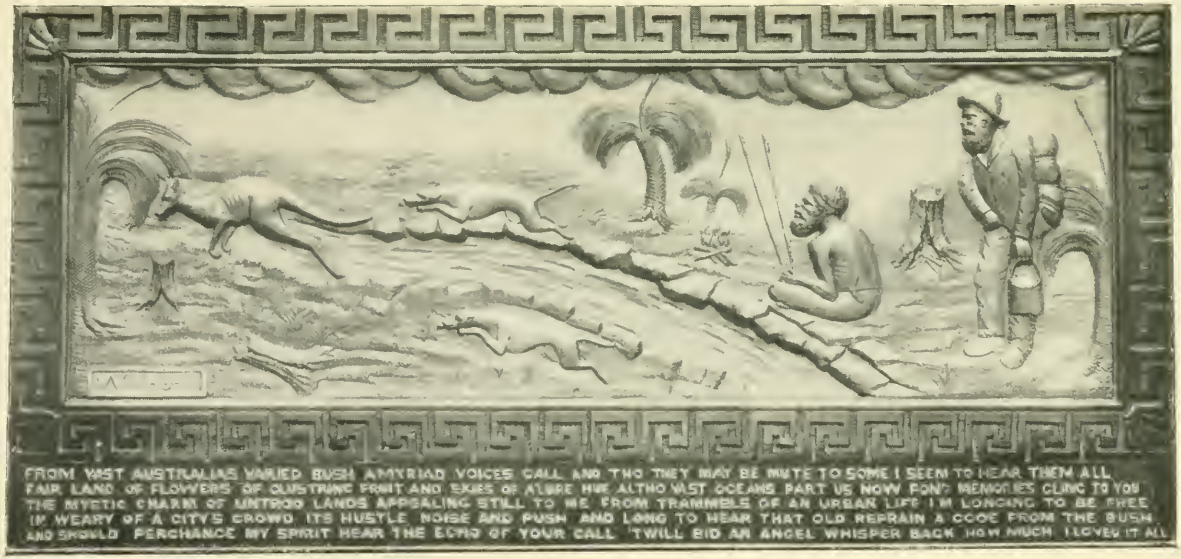
No rasper so big as to stop him,
  No distance was ever too great,
He would come with a rush at the finish,
  And cut down his field in the straight.

The sweetest of tempers when mounted,
  A regular demon to stay,
A horse that a king might be proud of,
  My black-pointed, beautiful bay.

His hoofs are now mounted in silver
  Supporting the trophies he won,
He died in the drought of the Nineties,
  Old "Falcon," the Pride of the Run.

When I gaze on the now empty saddle,
  The martingale, bridle and whip,
A sigh of regret will escape me,
  A tremor will lurk on my lip.

The son of "Zuleika" was peerless,
  I've ridden some beauties, but none
So handsome, good tempered and fearless,
  As "Falcon," the Pride of the Run.



(*From a Wood Carving.*—W. A. H.)

In the "Great Western Steeple" the "Banker,"
A horse from the far Castlereagh
Was one of the sort to beware of,
A ragged hipped, flea-bitten grey.

The course was a stiff and a long one,
The fences were solid and tall,
They were most of them raspers to ride at
The last one the stiffest of all.

A rainbow of silks in the sunshine,
As the riders parade on the track ;
A white-and-blue jacket on "Banker,"
On "Falcon," an Amber and Black.

We lined up in front of the starter,
Our eyes on the flag till it fell,
A thrill of excitement went coursing
Through horse and through rider as well.

We're off and the hoof-strokes resounding
Like breaking of surf on the shore;
"Six to four on the Banker bar nothing,"
The bookmakers lustily roar.

The light weights soon cut out the running
As we raced down the slope of the hill—
Old "Falcon" was pulling me double,
And I, in my seat—sitting still.

On the lowlands the "take-off" was heavy,
And over our fetlocks in mud,
The "Democrat" baulked at a rasper,
And brought down the "Postboy" and "Scud."

The Grey horse now took up the running,
He passed us by barely a head,
A stride—and again we drew level,
And over the hurdles we led.

We collared the "Pedlar" and "Transit,"
And shot past the Warrego "Swell,"
He cannoned in mid-air with "Smuggler,"
We heard the dull thud as he fell.

Neck and neck we now raced for a distance
Side by side over fences we flew,
The rider of "Banker" grew anxious,
And rode him for all that he knew.

We rattled the railings in rhythm,
We were shoulder to shoulder in air,
And heel jostled heel as we landed,
A sheet would have covered the pair.

But the Grey wasn't easily beaten,
He raced for the lead coming home,
His ribs rudely ripped by the rowels,
His flanks fairly fleckered with foam.

I steadied old "Falcon" a little,
The "Banker" shot past at the stand,
I heard the hoarse cheers in the distance,
From throats of the Castlereagh band.

They reckoned the race was a moral
For their upstanding flea-bitten grey,
I laughed to myself as they shouted,
The "Banker!" "The 'Banker's' away!"

"The amateur rider's outridden,"
"The golden bay Arab is done,"
Ah! they little knew what was in hand in
Old "Falcon," the Pride of the Run.

We hung for a time on his quarter ;
Then slowly drew up to his rein,
He clouted the rails at the corner,
We cleared them and caught him again.

The Grey horse was fully extended,
I felt the warm blast from his nose
And the swish of the whip that descended
In rib-binding slash as we rose.

The field vainly racing to catch us,
We came with a rush at the wall,
We crossed it together while shewing
The glint of our heels to them all.

There were signs of distress in the "Banker,"
A rasping great double ahead
I went for the pride of position,
I raced him—outpaced him and led.

I gained half a length in the landing ;
The flea-bitten favourite was done ;
The only one left in the running
Was "Falcon," the Pride of the Run.

Old " Falcon " was fencing superbly,
And flying his fences with ease ;
I slackened his reins for a moment,
He was pulling me over my knees.

"The Ring " were now shouting their wagers,
" A hundred to twenty—bar one : "
You could bet that the "one" they were barring
Was " Falcon," the Pride of the Run.

He was taking the snaffle with freedom,
His stride lengthy, level and low,
I stroked his sleek neck for a moment,
And said, " Now old boy you may go."

A touch with my heel and he answered,
He shot like a bolt from the blue,
Spread-eagling the field at the finish
Midst the cheers that were ringing anew.

Midst the roar of the crowd in the distance,
The waving of hats on the lawn,
Over fences too stiff to be broken,
He flung them behind him in scorn.

He shortened his stride near the railings,
And lifting the Amber and Black,
He flew the big fence, the bit in his teeth,
And eleven stone ten on his back.

His rise like a stag at the rasper,
His glorious leap I recall,
The flight through the air and the landing,
A furlong in front of them all.

A thunder of hoofs was behind us,
A shattering and splintering of rails,
A whistling of whalebone and whipcord,
But the blood of the Arab prevails.

He flashed past the post and the stewards ;
The "Great Western Steeple" was won!
And I for the last time dismounted
Old "Falcon," the Pride of the Run.

"Run," a Sheep or Cattle Ranch.

DROUGHT v. DELUGE.

AUSTRALIA'S silent central plains, I know
them all so well,
In rains a Stockman's Paradise, in droughts a
very Hell.
Fierce Drought now stalks across the land, so
barren, bare and red,
This spectre leaves to mark his trail, the dying
and the dead.
With Simoom breath he blasts the earth, and
withers every stream,
And following closely in his wake gaunt Famine
reigns supreme.
A bloodshot sun is blazing down, and not a
sign of change,
A fierce hot wind Sirocco like, sweeps o'er the
stony range.
Vast whirlwinds spin along the track, and
dust-formed pillars rise,

And fragments of a crumbling world are wafted
to the skies.
Great thunder clouds with billowy heads rise
threatening o'er the plain,
So prodigal of promises, so niggardly of
rain.
Deflected rays of noonday light cause spectral
trees to rise,
And stud the Isles in phantom lakes as shoreless
as the skies.
The silent Sirens of Mirage oft beckon and
beguile
The thirsty traveller from the track for many
a weary mile.
The trees are but the stunted shrubs that
shimmering rays enlarge,
The lakes are but illusions and the phantoms
of mirage.
Dumb suffering sheep in clusters group along
the heated glade,
*With drooping head and heaving flanks each
seeks the other's shade.

*Sheep in search of shade place their heads underneath each other's bodies.

(*From a Wood Carving by the Author.*)

Before the demon Drought appeared and everything went wrong,
They roamed in plenty o'er these plains a hundred thousand strong.
Now but the remnant of a flock, for years their owner's pride,
Their whitened bones like tombstones, mark the places where they died.
The wells have failed, the grass is gone, the tanks are nearly dry,
There's nothing left this remnant but to suffer and to die.
The self-reliant Bushmen who reclaimed these outer lands,
Wrought many a smiling homestead from a wilderness of sands.
When battling with the fiercest drought they scorned to cry retreat,
They didn't know surrender, and they wouldn't know defeat.
They watched the clouds with anxious eyes, and hope so long deferred,
And saw diminish day by day, the remnants of the herd,

And when their flocks in thousands died on
barren hill and plain,
They set their lips and steeled their hearts—
and waited for the rain.
And now there seems a coming change, there's
Lightning in the North,
The angry voice of Jupiter is heard in rising
wrath.
The Demon Drought makes fierce response with
hot Siroccan blast,
The rival forces face to face, the storm is
gathering fast.
A low black cloud against the wind comes
threatening from the West,
Advancing with resistless force above the
stony crest.
The Heavens resounding to the crash of thunder
pealing loud,
A vivid flash of lightning and the bursting of
the cloud.
A storm of hail comes rattling down like
shrapnel on the roofs,
Amidst the bellowing of the herds, the clatter-
ing of their hoofs.

The welcome rain comes down in sheets, the creeks are running free,
The arid plain of yesterday is like an inland sea.
Kaleidoscopic changes come o'er every hill and dale,
Gaunt Famine leaves the stricken land and Plenty will prevail.
The crimson curtain of the sun sinks slowly in the West,
Its tempered rays with genial warmth suffuse each moistened crest.
A generous Nature lends her aid to every growing thing,
And quickening in the grateful earth wild herbs luxuriant spring.
Lush vegetation on the plains, rich grasses clothe each hill,
While every erstwhile, sandy creek becomes a rippling rill.
The demon Drought has broken up and Famine ceased to reign,
Soon grateful flocks will revel in the plenty of the plain.

The citron eucalyptus yields its subtle scent so rare,
The raindrops shining on its leaves like diamonds in the air;
The warblers of the wilderness acclaim the fruitful scene,
Their joyous songs come floating down each verdure clad ravine.
Among Australia's varied flowers, the golden hues prevail,
And in a bounteous season gild each verdant hill and vale;
In fertile earth and humid warmth their glories soon unfold,
Last month a sheet of drifting dust—to-day a cloth of gold.

CLIMATES: A COMPARISON.

THERE'S a place in Northern Queensland
that the Bushmen call Mackay,
Where the sun is always blazing hot and every
throat is dry ;
I heard a Bushman call for drinks in words I
dare not quote,
But I heard the liquor hissing down his heated
hairy throat.
A sunstroke killed this Bushman, and his soul
to Hades went ;
Next day from Hades to Mackay a Hellogram
was sent
For blankets and an overcoat, he paid for a
reply,
And said he'd caught an awful chill, but really
felt quite spry,
For Hades was so bracing when compared with
North Mackay.

MUSIC ON THE WATERS.

[*Written in reply to a challenge to write thirty lines on sea-sickness with a musical term in every line.*]

IF rolling is her *crotchet*
This vessel ought to *score* :
She spoils my *rest*, she spoils my *notes*,
She spoils my *répertoire*.

There *demi* goes my dinner,
As the ship on *upper C*
Appoggiaturas. Oh ! the brute,
She's *pitched too high* for me.

The salt sea wind is very *sharp* :
I hate the briny *air* :
It makes the *quaver* in my voice
More *natural* than rare.

I find the great *crescendo swell*
Turns me in some degree.
I never could *compose* myself,
And serve my *time*, at sea.

I know you'll think me very *bass*,
I'll *pause* till calm prevails ;
It's all because they've gone and *set*
A bad *falsetto* sails,

I cannot *scale* the dizzy mast:
The *chords* are very slack ;
Oh ! how I *shake* ; I know I shall
B flat upon my back.

I'll bet a *tenor* that she strikes
The *bar* upon her lee ;
*Andante** up the money, should
She safely reach the *key*.

" *Encore !* Oh, steward, once again,"
Fortissimo I trill ;
Oh, *presto !* " Steward, hurry up,
Staccato ! ! I'm so ill."

**Ante up*, an Americanism for pay up.

A MARBLE CLIO.

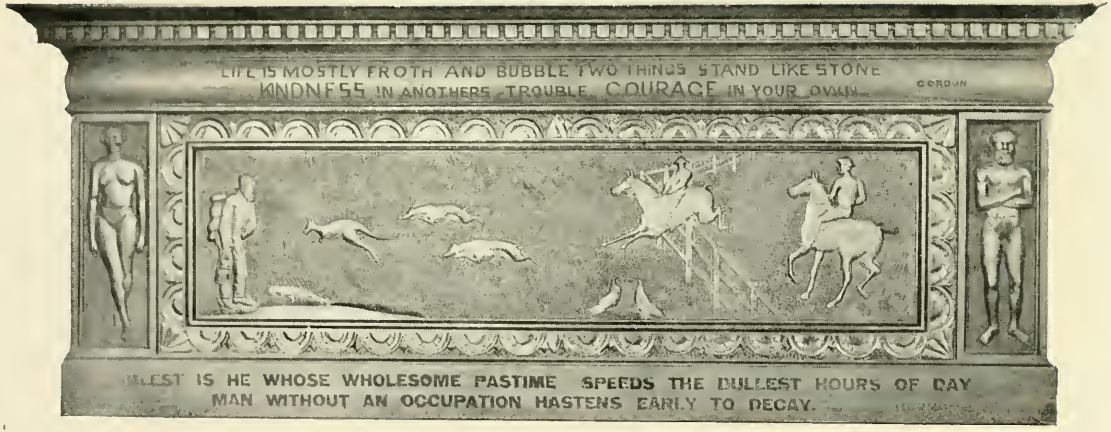
(*Poeta nascitur, non fit.*)

IN youth I dreamed a dream of Clio
Fickle muse of "Tuneful Nine,"
Dreamed that I on Mount Parnassus,
Knelt before her marble shrine.

Other muses may have tempted,
Yet my memory will recall
Clio as the most attractive
Most inconstant of them all.

Wandering near those limpid waters
Where Castalia's fountains play,
Methought I saw the Goddess beckon,
Seeming near, yet far away.

While the moonbeams on the ripples
As the waters rose and fell
Like a glittering swordblade gleaming
On the crest of every swell.



HUNTING.

Wood Carving—W. A. H.)

Like a shimmering pathway leading
To a dreamland far away,
Where all joys may be unending
Or all sorrows, who can say?

Dreaming that the waters breaking
On that dim and mystic shore,
Had a wealth of joyful music
I had never known before.

Dreaming that I crossed the plateau
Where the Goddess seemed to stand,
But in striving there to greet her
Clasped a cold and pulseless hand.

Naught was there but chiselled statue
Beckoning with uplifted thumb,
Cold in all its marble stillness
Radiant, beautiful, but dumb.

Then a peal of scornful laughter
Echoed down the mountain side,
From the muse in dreamy distance
Laughing at my wounded pride.

Now I knew this wayward Goddess
Had my humble verse despised,
And in anger undissembled
Thus the muse apostrophised.

Fickle Goddess, tho' thy votaries
Worship thee on bended knee,
While you wear no nuptial symbol
Why refuse a smile to me?

Why reject my simple off'ring,
Humbly placed before your shrine?
Why, accepting every other,
Still in scorn refusing mine?

Yet I will not now upbraid you,
Fondly loved for many a day;
I but clasped the lifeless marble
When I sought the living clay.

Let another's arms enfold you,
Let another's lips caress;
He to you may prove as constant,
You to me can not be less.

Let me lave in Lethe's waters,
Stifling every vain regret
And endeavour to forgive thee,
Or in flight of years forget;
And thine image cease to haunt me,
If not yet, not yet—not yet.

L'ENVOI.

Patient reader, pray be lenient,
When you read this erring verse,
Faulty in its rhyme and rhythm,
Yet perchance it might be worse.

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